The Skin of Objects (Norwich, 27 Jun 15)

Norwich Castle, Jun 27, 2015

Merlin Seller

'The Skin of Objects: Rethinking Surfaces in Visual Culture'

27th June 2015, 10:00-17:00 Norwich Castle
Organised by University of East Anglia, Sainsbury Institute For Art & Norwich Castle & Museum

Histories and theories of visual representation have often reduced the meaning of 'surface' to superficial elements rather than recognising them as a component which feeds into and activates the visual artwork's significance. In the visual arts surface has often been seen as sources of meanings and visual information or a self-contained aesthetic whole, exclusively associated with decoration or ornamentation. Jeff Koons prompts us to grapple with what is manifest in the world of objects: skins, materials, even picture planes and varnishes. Koons' metal 'balloon animals' and 'cartoonish' mirrors can offer a point of departure to think about the wider field of the weight of surface effects. While certain kinds of object are often treated as if they lack a surface, or are read as entirely 'surface'. Certain objects prompt us to think about the skin that enfolds them and yet others seem to blind us to their interior. From new developments in Phenomenology and Affect Theory to New Materialism and Thing Theory, we welcome papers which challenge received ideas concerning 'surface' in a variety of historical and contemporary contexts.

The Sainsbury Centre for Modern Art, UEA and Norwich Castle Museum welcome diverse papers on art historical and visual cultural subjects, thinking through the idea of 'Surface'. We encourage submissions which critique the idea of surface as supplement, and which engage related concepts such as: friction, edge, depth and (in)visibility.

This one-day conference will include guest speakers and an introductory tour of Norwich Castle Museum's new Jeff Koons exhibition, as well as coffee, a drinks reception and an optional lunch.

To submit a proposal for a 20-minute presentation, we require an abstract not exceeding 300 words and a brief professional biography of 100 words by 25th March 2015. All submissions should be sent to surfacesuea2015@gmail.com.

Reference:

CFP: The Skin of Objects (Norwich, 27 Jun 15). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 2, 2015 (accessed Nov 6, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/9599>.